

Washington, D.C. Demonstrating his commitment to family farmers and small business owners throughout Georgia’s Second Congressional District, Congressman Sanford Bishop voted in favor of legislation that would permanently repeal the federal estate tax—also known as the “death tax”—that has been taxing the ability of individuals to pass on assets to their heirs. Congressman Bishop cosponsored “The Death Tax Repeal Permanency Act of 2005” (H.R. 8) which passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 272 to 162 and which will now be reconciled with the Senate approved version of the bill.

Speaking on the House floor, Congressman Bishop delivered the following statement:

“Thank you Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize the hard-working people of America who have played by the rules and have paid their fair share. Decent, law-abiding, tax-paying Americans are the backbone of this country, Mr. Speaker, and the salt of the Earth. They are the farmers of Southwest Georgia and the family business owners who provide the jobs that keep small rural communities alive and flourishing. All across this land are Americans who have paid taxes their entire lives, only to face a final taxing event at death. They paid their taxes during their lifetimes and should not be charged again when they die.

The Death Tax represents all that is unfair and unjust about the tax structure in America because it undermines the life work and life savings of Americans who want only to pass on to their children and their grandchildren the fruits of their labor and the realization of their American Dream.

In my state of Georgia, farmers, many of whom are widowed women and the children of deceased farmers, are faced with losing their family farms because of this death tax. Employees of family businesses, many of whom are minorities, are at risk of losing their jobs because their employers are forced to pay the unfair and exorbitant Death Taxes levied upon them. Funeral homes, newspaper publishers, radio station owners, and dry cleaners are all affected – all across the demographic spectrum.

Mr. Speaker, although reasonable minds can differ on this issue, I believe that the Death Tax is politically misguided, morally unjustifiable, and downright un-American. Let us vote today to finally eliminate the Death Tax and return to the American people and their progeny the hard-earned fruits of their labor.”